

VOLUNTEERS

Policy Statement

Victim Support Service believes that volunteers can provide companionship and extend opportunities for victims of crime to regain their sense of security and well being. Volunteers will not replace paid staff rather they will enhance and complement the organisation's efforts to provide quality services for people who are victimised by criminal acts.

In addition, there are many opportunities for volunteers to contribute to community education and crime prevention activities that the organisation undertakes (eg. community talks, victim awareness programs and publicity events).

Further opportunities exist for volunteers to help with internal operations at Victim Support Service. These include strategic planning, advisory and working groups, telephone answering, the library, and other administrative activities. Volunteers are also able to be elected to the Board of Management if they are members of the organisation.

The participation of volunteers in Victim Support Service is a 'win-win' situation. There is a reciprocal arrangement whereby the organisation benefits through being more effective and offering more programs – from which the community benefits. The volunteer also benefits by gaining personal fulfilment from contributing to and belonging to a worthy cause.

Victim Support Service encourages volunteers to be members of the organisation, however does not insist upon this.

A **volunteer** is anyone who donates their time, skills, knowledge and energy of their own free will and without expectation of monetary reward in order to provide a service to the community.

A **volunteer coordinator** is an identified member of staff who accepts responsibility for the selection, coordination, supervision and support of volunteers. The allocation of such responsibility will be made by the relevant manager taking into account team workloads. Volunteer co-ordination will be an integral part of the responsibilities of Local Area Co-ordinators in regional centres.

Aims of the Policy

To define the roles of the volunteers and of staff who are managing volunteers.

To encourage and facilitate the engagement of volunteers by Victim Support Service and establishment of effective working relationships.

To show that Victim Support Service values volunteers and treats them in a similarly professional manner as to the organisation's management of paid staff.

Procedures

Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment of volunteers will take place either at the initiation of staff or through inquiries received by potential volunteers, or via agencies like Volunteering SA. Inquirers are issued with a "Volunteer Information Pack" which includes an application form requesting them to indicate their area(s) of interest. Completed application forms are referred to the relevant volunteer coordinator(s) for action as are subsequent inquiries. Appointment of volunteers will be made against selection criteria contained in a range of Volunteer Job Specifications as well as guidelines relating to the recruitment of current clients and offenders – see "Procedures for Volunteer Recruitment" (Volunteer Manual) and "Staff and Volunteer Recruitment - Police Records Check & Criminal Conviction Guideline".

Orientation/Training

Volunteer Coordinators will be responsible for ensuring the induction and ongoing training of volunteers. Volunteers will be encouraged to attend relevant training and must attend appropriate initial training.

Occupational Health and Safety

During induction the volunteer coordinator is responsible for ensuring volunteers are aware of relevant occupational health and safety responsibilities, principles and practices.

Supervision and Support

The overall supervision and support of volunteers is the responsibility of all relevant staff. This responsibility may be delegated to identified staff who are volunteer coordinators. In working with other team members, volunteers will also receive supervision and support appropriate to their role in meeting the needs of particular clients. The volunteer coordinator will ensure that volunteers understand the avenue of supervision and support being provided to them.

Review

Volunteers will be informed of the intention of Victim Support Service to provide them with structured feedback on the volunteer work they undertake. Reviews will be conducted at regular intervals by relevant staff members who have direct contact with those volunteers.

If performance difficulties arise the volunteer coordinator will discuss concerns with the volunteer, set objectives and review times and hopefully resolve any difficulties. In the unlikely instance where resolution is not reached the relevant manager/Chief Executive may be brought in to further discussions. If still no resolution is found Victim Support Service retains the right to 'dismiss' a volunteer.

Out of Pocket Expenses

Volunteers will be reimbursed for expenses incurred as a direct result of their voluntary service. Rates of reimbursement will be reviewed and updated and included in the latest “Volunteer Reimbursement Policy” in this manual.

Insurance

Victim Support Service will maintain relevant personal and professional liability insurance for volunteers and maintain a register of engaged volunteers for insurance purposes – insurance covers volunteers regardless of their status as members.

Use of Private Vehicles

A volunteer will not be required to use his or her private vehicle against his or her wishes, and some voluntary roles may not require a vehicle to be used at all.

Private vehicles are not to be used by volunteers to transport clients due to the liability risk and difficulty in ensuring procedures are followed.

If the volunteer coordinator considers that the circumstances justify it, permission may be given for private vehicle use and reimbursement of costs will be made in accordance with the rates specified in the “Volunteer Reimbursement Policy”.

Accepting Gifts and/or Payment

It is identified in the “policy statement” section of this document that volunteer participation is a “win-win” situation with reciprocal arrangements by which Victim Support Service, the community and the volunteer benefit. An underlying principle is that volunteers gain personal fulfilment from contributing and belonging to our worthy cause. For this reason, primarily, it is accepted that volunteers do not accept payment or substantial gifts for their contribution. Similarly staff do not accept personal payment or substantial gifts either, to ensure that conflicts of interest are not created nor such personal gain possible. Offers of such payment are rare, however if they do occur then it is of paramount importance that there is consistency of treatment and expectation. When an organisation or even an individual recipient of a service wishes to offer a payment or substantial gift, then this must be made to the organisation as a donation, sponsorship or service fee.

This process ensures that our expectations of recipients are consistent, governance is above board and insurance policies are not compromised.

Such small personal gifts as an invitation to a meal while on a public speaking occasion, chocolates, flowers, a bottle of wine etc are not substantial enough to be restricted by this policy and may be retained by the individual.

**Reviewed January 2002: Approved by Board 19th June 2002
Reviewed March 2006**

Volunteers

Rights

- Enjoyable, meaningful work.
- Expression of appreciation by the organisation/staff.
- Mutual trust and cooperation.
- A well managed program.
- Understanding that you have a life outside work.
- Clear understanding of your role and objectives.
- Negotiation and consultation about your role and workload.
- Professional treatment.
- Attendance at activities for volunteers.

Responsibilities

- Effective performance.
- Only making commitments you can keep.
- Keeping commitments made ie being reliable.
- Conforming to Occupational Health and Safety regulations and systems.
- Accepting and working within organisational objectives and systems.
- Maintaining confidentiality about clients and the organisation.
- Following an appropriate work ethic.
- Acceptance that a volunteer does have a different, but not less important, role from employed staff.